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Federal Communications Commission
Washington, DC 20554

Re: RM-9196 as presented in FCC 98-183

Note: For purposes of clarity, comments on subjects will follow the order under, "DISCUSSION," in the TABLE OF CONTENTS.

Number of license classes

The matter is worse than you state in the NPRM. There are seven classes of operator licenses NOT six! They are: (1) Novice; (2) Technician Plus; (3) Technician licensed BEFORE 3/21/87; (4) Technician licensed AFTER 3/21/87; (5) General; (6) Advanced; and (7) Extra. This is true because you have muddled the waters with a change of requirements under the same name. While not adding another name, you have allowed a pool of operators to be designated by a single name, but achieving that with two levels of testing. You make this significant by stating they "could qualify for a General Class operator license by passing written examination Element 3(B)[,] which consists of thirty questions on additional privileges of a General Class operator ..." The fact is: one - anyone - cannot make an illogical decision and not expect that illogical decision to cause problems at some later time. Now, you have seven (7) license classes to sort out!

The seven (7) license classes appear to be:

<u>Class</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Theory/Regs.</u>
1.) Novice	5 wpm	low theory, minimum Regs.
2.) Tech + < 3/87	5 wpm	medium theory, moderate Regs.
3.) Tech + > 3/87	5 wpm	medium theory, medium Regs.
4.) Tech -	N/A	medium theory, medium Regs.
5.) General	13 wpm	medium theory, moderate Regs.
6.) Advanced	13 wpm	moderate theory, moderate Regs.
7.) Extra	20 wpm	heavy theory, heavy Regs.

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Now, to compress these seven (7) distinct classes into four (4) classes WITHOUT sweeping more logic under the carpet is a mystery to me. I mean, you can do it by some convoluted stretching and bending of regulations, but the end result will be a marginal disaster. The fact is: you have seven (7) distinct classes of operators. Putting Tech + operators on HF without a 13 wpm skill level and experience is no solution, because the FCC is currently not enforcing the regulations. We have been through that before.

In the late 1960's and early 1970's, there was a great rush into the Citizen's Band - newly made attractive due to the FCC's unwillingness to police the regulations. Hoards of "operators" invaded the CB frequencies (and frequencies below and above) without any constraints, training in communications techniques, or interest in the improvement of the art. There were no callsigns, no proven operating techniques being passed down from the oldtimers - there weren't any oldtimers, no regulations to follow, etc.

What a contrast with the FCC's Incentive Licensing undertaken in the mid-1970's in the Amateur Radio Service. The purpose was to raise the standard of achievement, knowing that many would take the challenge and acquire the skills to become more knowledgeable in the radio sciences and operating skills. Some operators complained, but most realized that anything worth having is worth the effort to gain. Axiomatically, anything a person gets for nothing is almost universally taken for granted. As long as there are people, that will be true. Yet, many will try to make the gains for free.

What you have is a collection of dissimilar items you are trying to squeeze into a smaller number of items. I suggest you delay any reduction, compressing, contorting, shaving of the Amateur Radio Classes until they can be more carefully analyzed by a blue-ribbon panel of knowledgeable Amateurs. They should be given the assignment and a target date of six to eight months to return a plan. That should be put out as a NPRM for the Amateur community for comments.

Greater volunteer examiner opportunities

No comment.

RACES Station Licenses

Let them expire. The WCNxxx licenses have only been lightly used anyway.

Privatization of Certain Enforcement Procedures

Your comments in paragraph 18, "One possibility, for example, would be to encourage or require persons bringing complaints of interference to the Commission to include a draft order to show cause to initiate a revocation or cease and desist hearing proceeding." This is a further impediment to the complaint process. Unfortunately, the enforcement of the regulations by the Commission have been either abysmal or nonexistent. Farming that out to some other

organization not really having the authority will result in serious "range justice" that could trouble the courts for years.

The solution is for the FCC to enforce the regulations just as the it should. Now, how you get the funds from Congress to do it is another matter. That is the real problem you need to fix. Continuing to abdicate that responsibility only worsens the situation.

Telegraphy examination requirements

In paragraph 19, you state, "... the examinee's level of skill in sending and ..." The fact is: sending has not been a part of the examination for some years. The assumption was that a person could always send faster than they could receive. I personally believe that to be a valid assumption. The fact is: in most cases, when the sending test was administered EVEN by FCC personnel, only a few characters were ever sent merely to look for proper spacing of elements. Never was anything like a full minute of error free sending required to pass the test. It appears your staff has not been doing it's work thoroughly.

In paragraph 20, you state, "... in response to the sentiment of the amateur community, ..." Actually, the sentiment was not from the amateur community. It was from the would-be amateur community - those who want the privileges, but not the acquiring of qualifications. Suppose persons wanted to be brain surgeons or airline pilots, but felt that the requirements were too onerous and brought pressure to lower those requirements. Should they be lowered? I say NO!

The International Morse Code has been much vilified. It has been the language which has tied the amateur community together since the beginning. Yes, there have developed newer means of communication. Yet, Morse Code still is in use around the world. Unfortunately, some have looked at the Morse Code as an initiation rite - "I had to suffer through it, so you will too!" I personally have had students taking Novice classes, who screamed at having to learn it. The interesting thing is that many have told me later they really "enjoy" the code.

The is one aspect of the Morse Code that seems to elude most people - even the Commission. That is: learning the Morse Code teaches a person to listen - yes, to listen. Listening is not a natural trait. You have to work at it. To give an example, in the Citizen's Band experience we have a demonstration of what happens, when you allow a lot of untrained people talk without getting them the skills to listen. The condition continues to this day - a useless chunk of spectrum being trashed by people who only want to talk.

You further state in paragraph 20, "we provided an entry level opportunity to otherwise qualified persons who found that telegraphy was a barrier ..." The fact is: they just did not want to put forth a little effort to learn it. We, in the amateur community, have seen youngsters on the order of six, seven, and eight learn the Morse Code. I personally have seen retirees in their seventies and above learn it. Then you go on in paragraph 20, "... for advancing both

communication and technical skills , and the expansion of the existing reservoir within the amateur radio service of trained operators, ..." You use conflicting logic here. You cannot reduce the qualifications, on one hand, and increase the reservoir of trained operators - unless you do it by fiat. That is what you propose.

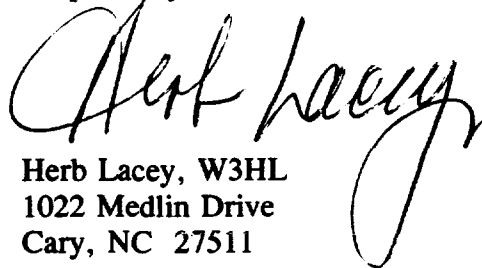
The Morse Code is taught in the most haphazard manner. It is amazing that anyone ever learns it. Any other discipline is taught with a carefully orchestrated plan flying a plane, brain surgery, etc. Teaching the Morse Code involves handing the aspirant a chart showing the Morse characters and a code practice oscillator and telling them, "good luck." Teaching flying the same way would be an unmitigated disaster, of course. A few seem to be able to bear the mental pain to finally understand that you must hear the whole character as a complete sound. Most are caught in the whirlpool of counting the elements in a character to decode each character. It cannot be done at over 13 wpm. For you to suggest a test level of 5 wpm is to deceive someone into believing they can copy the Morse Code, when they can't!

Conclusion

I may be a lone voice, but I oppose the efforts of RM-9196 as it will seriously damage the Amateur Radio Service beyond repair. There are other ways to improve the Service.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,



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